The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 37, No. 1, January 2005

Carolina country

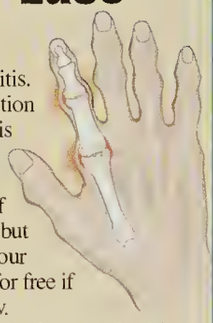
NORTH CAROLINA

Women & Transportation

Touchstone Energy

Publish your old photos in a new book—See page 12

"Arthritis Pain Relief Secrets: How Olive Oil, Sunshine, Water and More Can Ease Your Pain Forever!"



(By Frank K. Wood)

If you suffer from joint pain, chronic inflammation, and restricted motion, you need *Arthritis Pain Relief Secrets: How Olive Oil, Sunshine, Water, and More Can Ease Your Pain Forever*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Publishing in Peachtree City, Georgia.

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- Free prescription drugs! Arthritis medicines can take a huge chunk of your income, but you can get your prescriptions for free if you know how.
- A glass of this cheap, refreshing beverage will take the edge off your arthritis pain, as well as ease a world of other hurts.
- Joint pain? Foods rich in this vitamin may slow the damage of osteoarthritis, and even repair damaged cartilage! Get the facts.
- Arthritis pain relief! Find it in your spice rack!
- Eat to end your pain! Discover these 12 pain-fighting foods that work with your body to ease inflammation and repair damaged joints.
- The lowly cabbage has surprising healing properties that combat many infectious skin problems, strengthen weak bones, and lessen arthritis pain.

TO ORDER A COPY

Arthritis Pain Relief Secrets for $9.99. **See coupon.** © FC&A 2005

"How to Soothe an Irritable Bowel!"

(By Frank K. Wood)

If you suffer from bloating, abdominal cramps, chronic constipation/diarrhea, or other symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), you need *Complete Guide to Digestive Health: Plain Answers About IBS, Constipation, Diarrhea, Heartburn, Ulcers, and More*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Publishing in Peachtree City, Georgia.

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- Constipation: A natural cure that's better than fiber.
- Small but mighty fruit ... just eat 5 to get more than one third of your daily fiber!
- Lower blood pressure ... fewer ulcers ... less colitis ... just some of the benefits of letting yourself do this.
- Put a stop to constipation with as little as one tablespoon a day of this mystery food.
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- Chew this at every meal for a happy, healthy colon.
- Irritable bowel syndrome? Check here for another common disorder that could be your real problem.
- Like red meat? You can still lower cancer risks by adding this to your plate.
- Serve safe spuds ... foil wrapped potato can spell danger.
- Heal your body, improve digestion, moisturize skin, help control weight, and ... it's free.
- Vitamins and minerals may help keep you from getting colon cancer, even if this awful killer runs in your family. Good news in the book.

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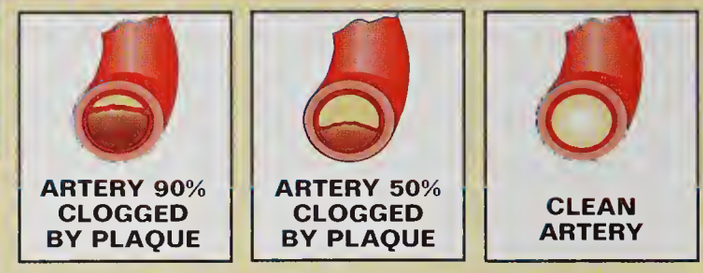

"High Blood Pressure Lowered Naturally — Your Arteries Can Clean Themselves!

(By Frank K. Wood)

If you suffer from high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, clogged arteries, or other circulatory problems, you need *High Blood Pressure Lowered Naturally: Your Arteries Can Clean Themselves*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Publishing in Peachtree City, Georgia.

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- How to control your temptations and successfully resist fattening foods — even your favorite desserts.
- What never to drink if you're taking high blood pressure medicine. This fruit juice may drive your medication to toxic levels.
- This "miracle soup" not only helps reverse cholesterol levels and improves blood flow, but also satisfies salt cravings without raising your blood pressure.
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- Add years to your life! Doing this may reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke and improve the quality of your life.

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Publish your old photos in a new book. See details on page 12.

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Determination, optimism and a desire to reach people

Michael E.C. Gery, editor

Chris Gallagher is a sixth-grade teacher, and as his school's principal says, "Middle-school kids can be vicious." Those kids can be especially rough on disabled people like Chris Gallagher. But more often than not, Mr. Gallagher earns his students' respect and admiration from Day One and keeps it.

Born with a rare condition that left his arms and hands practically useless, Chris learned to make his legs and feet do much of what his arms and hands would do. More than that, he learned determination, optimism and a desire to reach other people. He's an expert bodyboard surfer. Using his feet, he drives a car, eats at the dinner table, opens flip-top soda cans, writes on the blackboard, talks on the phone, you name it. As you can imagine, his students think he is totally cool and awesome.

Gallagher was guest speaker last November at a luncheon that eastern North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives hosted in honor of schoolteachers. The teachers who attended won 2004-2005 Bright Ideas grants given by seven cooperatives. That one banquet room in a Greenville hotel held some of the most imaginative school teachers you'll find anywhere. And Chris Gallagher knew it.

He wanted to make three points: teachers really influence students, bullying is a problem, and standardized testing may be getting out of hand.

Chris Gallagher with Paula Ange (left), a Falkland Elementary teacher in Pitt County whose Bright Ideas grant will help students write and publish their autobiographies. Linda Pate (right) of Pitt & Greene EMC awarded the grant.

As a student, Chris Gallagher walked into his drafting class and the teacher Mr. Sanchez wondered what he would do with a student who couldn't use his hands. Mr. Sanchez got him a special table he could use with his feet and put him to work. Likewise, his physical education teacher made him play baseball, floor hockey ("I kicked the puck around") and take swimming class.

"Some other teachers didn't make me do as much," he said. "They had set their standards too low. You should set your standards high. You never know what people may be capable of, especially those who have learning disabilities."

Bullies certainly picked on Chris Gallagher the student. He accepted the challenge of one of them to fight after school. "But if I'm not there," he told the boy, "you start without me." Bullying takes a regrettable toll on young people, yet typically, he said, adults or peers do not intervene. He urged teachers to recognize bully-victim situations, to insist on school-wide programs to address the problem, and to intervene when they can. He said such conflicts can be mediated successfully, and bullies can be set straight by requiring them to, say, clean up the school grounds.

When Gallagher said, "I'm doing more and more testing and less and less teaching," most teachers in the room nodded in recognition. His students must take 16 mandatory tests per year, in addition to those he gives. So much testing, he said, diverts attention from course material and "pits teacher against teacher. These tests really are testing the teachers." Add to that the mounting teacher development and continuing education requirements (500 hours in five years in his state), and teachers begin saying "It's a lot to ask for what we're being paid."

"Of course we're doing this not for money but to make a difference in children's lives," Gallagher said. "But the result will be: all children left behind."

He got no argument from these eastern North Carolina teachers.

The Greenville Bright Ideas luncheon—and two others like it in Charlotte and Raleigh—celebrated the projects these teachers are conducting this year because of the cooperatives' grants, which can be up to $2,000 each. Among the eastern North Carolina schools there were 34 projects. All the teachers I met spoke enthusiastically about theirs.

Retha Smith's family and consumer science students (formerly "home ec") at Southwestern Middle School in Bertie County will teach other students in the school about good nutrition. Marie Swann's Science Olympiad team at Washington High in Beaufort County will make a hands-on museum open to all students. Ann Moore's students at Akers Alternative in Roanoke Rapids will build garden irrigation, solar lighting and composting systems. Joel Groetsch will buy a table saw to teach his Cape Hatteras Secondary School carpentry students how to use the equipment safely. Karen Pritchard's science and math students at Hertford Grammar School will get an interactive, hands-on lab. Susan Warren's Stokes Elementary students in Pitt County will incubate chicken eggs and record what happens.

The Bright Ideas program this year received more than 1,700 proposals for such projects. North Carolina communities are lucky to have teachers like these.

Rehabilitating wildlife requires a permit

We read with interest the letter from Wilma Miller of West Jefferson ["First Person," November 2004]. While the couple appears to have thought out their approach very well and researched the birds' feeding habits and needs, there are concerns.

There are federal and state regulations that require a permit to rehabilitate native birds. State regulations also require a permit to rehabilitate native mammals.

Diseases can be transmitted to people and domestic pets by both birds and mammals, some of them life threatening (rabies is a prime example if the individual were to try to help an orphaned mammal in the way the Millers helped the birds). If there are children in the household, this can be especially problematic as they have more poorly developed immune systems than do adults and are more susceptible to communicable diseases.

Problems arise when the animals are not exposed to their own species and imprint on people or become habituated to them. A well intentioned individual may raise a healthy animal that is unable to integrate into a social group of its own kind.

Without access to current information, individuals may not use the best diet when trying to raise orphaned wildlife, and while the animals may survive they may not be as healthy as they need to be to survive on their own when they are released into the wild. Reliable information can be obtained through either of the national rehabilitation organizations or one of the various state organizations, although they may not release information without proof of permit status. Information gleaned over the Internet may or may not be reliable depending on who posted it.

We strongly recommend that individuals finding injured or orphaned wildlife turn the animals over to permitted wildlife rehabilitators who are better equipped to raise the animals in ways that optimize their chances of survival.

Rehabilitators can be located at these Web sites:
Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina www.ncwildliferehab.org
National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association www.nwrawildlife.org

Joan McMurray, secretary
Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

Cole getting cool

My grandson, Cole Salsman, seems to enjoy other uses for his mother's antique splatter ware container. We are members of Blue Ridge Electric in Watauga County where we have our mountain retreat. In the middle of the hot Fayetteville summers, we really enjoy our escapes to the cool mountains.

Christie Yencho
Fayetteville

The Flanders motorcycle

The great-grandparents of Jeanie Smart Fusco ["Stories About Getting to Know Your Grandparents," December 2004] are shown on a Flanders motorcycle, one of hundreds of brand names available in the early years of the 20th century. By 1923, however, that number was down to two: Indian and Harley.

Flanders motorcycles were manufactured between 1911 and 1914. I am told the company manufactured a V-Twin engine for the 1914 model year, so I would assume the pictured model would have to be a 1911, 1912 or 1913 model. Not exactly "Civil War-era," as Ms. Fusco said, but old, nevertheless.

The front fork features a vertical spring shock absorbing system, similar to what can be found in some current models of Harley-Davidson machines.

Early motorcycles were nothing more than motorized bicycles, and the Flanders was no exception. Bicycle-type pedals were used to start the engine. Once the engine was running, power was transmitted to the rear wheel via a leather drive belt.

Another unique feature of this machine is the seating arrangement. Two individual saddle-type seats were installed.

Donald E. Good
Chocowinity
Tideland EMC

It is a Flanders" motorcycle, manufactured by E. M. Flanders. In those days there were many "manufacturers" of motorcycles and cars. Usually manufacturing was nothing more than assembling a machine from various and sundry available parts that were manufactured by others. The engine of the motorcycle pictured is an Enfield engine that was made in England.

Flanders also manufactured an auto called the EMF, his initials, which some said meant "Every Morning Fix."

Boone Mora
Garden Valley, Cal.

It had a 499-cc (30-cubic-inch) single-valve, single-cylinder engine. Not quite "Civil War-era," I'm afraid. I don't think we had very many internal-combustion engine driven vehicles during the Civil War.

Roy Davis
Goldsboro
Tri-County EMC

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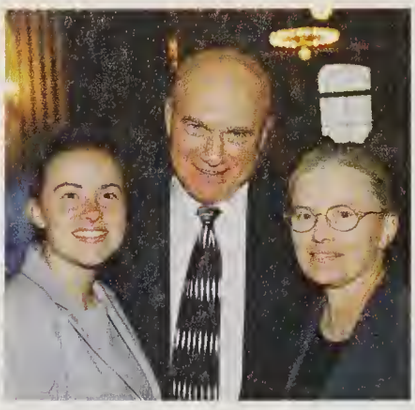

Charles Tolley with his daughter Elizabeth (left) and wife Sandra during a 2003 trip to Washington, D.C.

Charles Tolley's career with French Broad EMC

In June 1974, Charles R. Tolley went to work as an engineer with French Broad Electric Membership Corp. He decided to look for a job elsewhere about a year later, shortly after the co-op's July 1975 annual membership meeting. Some 3,000 members showed up at that meeting, and most were angry. "Some carried guns," Tolley recalls. Earlier in the year they saw their electric bills more than double. Many protested, and refused to pay their bills. They vowed to kick out the six board members scheduled for re-election that July, then put the co-op up for sale. After seven testy hours in the meeting, the co-op's general manager was escorted home by police and one of his district managers fell sick from exhaustion and also was escorted home. Tolley figured that not only would the manager lose his job, but so would he. When the board vice president asked him to stay in the office during the board's August meeting, Tolley began packing his things. But the board called him in and instead asked him to take over as French Broad EMC's general manager.

After having played five seasons of football at Clemson University then serving as an Army officer in Vietnam prior to returning home to Madison County in 1971, Charles Tolley was up for the challenge of running a co-op whose membership was more or less in revolt. He soon earned the confidence of members and directors and ran the co-op for 29½ years until he retired last December.

French Broad EMC serves about 34,000 members in some of the state's most rugged mountains and woodlands: Madison, Yancey and Mitchell counties, and parts of Buncombe County, N.C. and Unicoi and Cocke counties in Tennessee. Except for within the towns it serves (Marshall, Mars Hill, Bakersville and Burnsville), the co-op averages about five accounts per mile of power line. Tolley says French Broad line trucks can't even reach about 40 percent of the co-op's territory without considerable difficulty, which requires men to sometimes carry poles to some locations, or drag them in by rope or even by mule, and set them by hand. While that may seem to be the old way of doing things, it actually requires considerable ingenuity. Under Tolley's leadership, French Broad EMC has employed not only the smartest methods but also the smartest technology available, including wireless remote meter reading and fiber optics data transmission cable. "There are places on our system where a guy might fix a line somewhere at night and then would have to drive 15 or 18 miles around the mountain to close the breaker," he says. "Now we can call up that location on a computer and close the breaker for him. I can do that from home, if I have to."

Likewise, French Broad's membership reflects some of the most traditional, old-time mountain people along with progressive, visionary new-timers. Managing the co-op, Tolley says, has required balancing all members' interests. About 20 years ago, he remembers, the co-op called community meetings to discuss what had become acrimonious relations between longtime residents and new ones. "People said they were being treated like outsiders. I told them at these meetings, 'You're only an outsider if you choose to be. If you accept the customs here and accept your neighbors for who they are, we'll all get along.' We had to show them that we don't treat older members better or any differently than new ones. And since then that situation has improved a whole lot."

What characterizes Charles Tolley is his willingness to do whatever it takes. He once faced off with a man holding a shotgun who had promised to shoot the next person from French Broad EMC who showed up on his property. He is the only co-op manager who has always worked outside with his crews during all major outages. Grinning, he says, "They won't quit as long as the old man is there." That includes working almost three weeks in the cold and snow of the "Blizzard of the Century" in March 1993. After nearly losing their way in a total "white out" and chest-deep snow, his crew finally made it to the road along the river where they then cut their way through 141 trees over the next seven hours to go the nine miles to the EMC office.

In fact, Charles Tolley looks forward to getting outdoors more often in retirement, "to catch up on hunting and fishing." He's the kind who ties his own flies and stalks deer on foot with a bow and arrow. He also expects to go into the childcare business with his wife, Sandra, and their new granddaughter who's not yet 1.

"I have had the great fortune of having employees who truly love working for French Broad Electric," he says. "They truly love serving our members. And people can tell that. We have meter readers who go up into these hollers, and they might be the only person who's come up there in a few days. Members leave them a piece of pie, a sausage biscuit. And our people check in on the ones they know would appreciate it."

It's that kind of personal yet even-handed and thorough service that keeps cooperatives strong, Tolley says. "Co-ops will last as long as members maintain confidence that we are here to serve their needs. We must treat members like people, not numbers."

—Michael E.C. Gery

Gary Whitener's career with Rutherford EMC

In the early 1970s when Gary Whitener ran his family's feed, seed, fertilizer and country store in western Catawba County, he got to know the local electric cooperative, Rutherford Electric Membership Corp. For one thing, members could pay their light bills right there in the store. For another, Gary Whitener was elected to the Rutherford EMC board of directors in 1971. And after ice storms, the Whitener family would open up the place to offer comfort and hot meals to REMC linemen working long days and nights repairing lines and poles.

At one point, his doctor advised him to think of another line of work where lifting sacks wouldn't aggravate his back. It was about then, in 1980, when REMC's manager Tommy Gibbs and board president Fred Mintz asked the 41-year-old Whitener if he'd consider running the co-op's Lincoln-Gaston district. Gary and his wife, Linda, did not take long to accept the idea.

"That district was a fast-growing one and still is," said Whitener from his Forest City office as he approached his Jan. 6 retirement date. "But the employees rallied around and said they'd do whatever it takes to help me. I'd known many of them anyway. Cooked ham, bacon, eggs, sausage for them when they'd come into the store pulling ice from their pockets after a storm. And the Lord blessed me with being a fast learner. Once I learn something, I don't forget it."

His dedication to employees and the members they serve, and his abiding goodwill and friendliness, led Gary A. Whitener to the co-op's top management position in 1984 and kept him there 20 years. He leaves a 63,000-member utility stronger than it was and prepared for another 20 years of growth. Increasing demand in the 1980s and 1990s required Whitener to plan upgrades such as substation improvements and replacing 44-kilovolt transmission lines with 100-kilovolt line, including 65 miles of line on concrete or steel poles. While outages were common when he first began, the co-op now has one of the lowest rates of outages per member in the state. Relocating poles in the woods that storms repeatedly took down and placing them near roads allowed the co-op to institute a maintenance program along those rights of way. "I learned early on that power lines and trees don't mix," Whitener said.

That lesson was never more obvious than when Hurricane Hugo struck in 1989. Near midnight the evening of the storm, he phoned REMC's Cherryville office and advised all employees to find shelter, and those who couldn't should come to his basement. "My wife still teases me that we had a house full of electric linemen and we still couldn't keep the power on." Not a single connection in the 28,000-member Lincoln-Gaston District had power the next morning. It took REMC nearly two weeks to rebuild.

"We'll continue to have storms and outages," he said, recalling severe flooding last summer. "But now we can get the system back up much faster. People see us back on before other utilities, and they wonder how they can sign up for Rutherford EMC."

Michael E.C. Gery

Gary Whitener (right) with board treasurer David. W. McGimsey during last October's Rutherford EMC annual meeting.

Gary Whitener has shined in the political arena as well. He served as Catawba County Commissioner from 1978-90 including eight years as chairman. ("That kept me very well connected to the local issues, the infrastructure, schools. Wherever you go—whether it's the feed store, the mill, a church, wherever—somebody's going to give you good advice *somewhere* along the way. So I have always tried to listen real well.") He counts among his personal friends dozens of federal and state officials. When critical issues would come to a head in Washington, Whitener was one of those specially called in to press the case for electric cooperatives. President George H.W. Bush even offered him the top post at the Rural Electrification Administration. ("But I knew my family and I would not be comfortable in Washington, D.C.") While he has long supported the Republican Party, he makes it clear that "when it comes to the rural electric program, there are no party lines." He saw that clearly in April 2003 when Gov. Mike Easley, a Democrat, inducted him into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the state's highest civilian honor.

When states considered restructuring the electric utility business a few years ago, Whitener said he wasn't worried. "I said, bring it on! I would have enjoyed competing against any of them. But I don't think we'll see anything happen anytime soon. It has not succeeded anywhere they've tried it. And we have the confidence of our members, as long as we do what we're supposed to do."

The Gary Whitener big grin and greeting are legendary among electric co-op managers and directors. Sylvia Hedin, who's been his administrative assistant the whole time, says she can tell how he's feeling as soon as he walks into the building. And more than likely, she says, he's in a good mood. "He is such a people person. He is considerate of everyone, a pleasure to be around."

That may be one reason why he's been happily married to Linda for 44 years. He's looking forward to time with her, his three children and their families, especially six grandchildren at the Whitener place on Ocean Isle. He also will tend to another passion: tending cattle on his farm. He and Linda don't have grand travel plans, except the visitations on behalf of Providence Baptist Church and trips to Cooksville Grill and Norman's Cafe. He'll enjoy all that, but he says, "What I'll miss is the people here."

—Michael E.C. Gery

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Carolina country

Mary Nicholson, the first licensed female pilot in North Carolina, flew with the British Air Transport Auxiliary during World War II. She was killed in action in 1943 when her plane crashed because of mechanical failure.

UNTYING THE APRON STRINGS

Photo courtesy of the N.C. Office of Archives and History

A tribute to North Carolina women in transportation

By Al Stewart

North Carolina women who have influenced the business of transportation are the subject of a new exhibit at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer. Sponsored by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, the exhibit "Untying the Apron Strings" shows the impact several Tar Heel women have had in the fields of railroads, aviation, automobile safety, highways and trucking.

Uniforms, a variety of artifacts, props and rare photos are displayed in glass cases. One case shows a gray uniform shirt worn by Dee Parton, a highway patrolwoman who served in Buncombe County 1981–90. Brenda Oxendine, who joined the patrol in 1980, is acknowledged as the first female state highway patrol officer.

Harriet Berry played a crucial role in securing passage of the state Highway Act in 1921. This act created North Carolina's first gasoline tax and highway bonds and led to the state's reputation as the "Good Roads State." Berry led the revitalization of the North Carolina Good Roads Association.

Nettie Cheek learned Morse Code and telegraphy as an employee of the Atlantic and Yadkin Railroad and became station master at Pleasant Garden in 1924. She ended her 36-year railroad career in 1945.

Mary Webb Nicholson, a native of Greensboro, was the first female licensed pilot who flew in air shows across the state in the 1930s. She was one of 25 female pilots to train in Canada for the British Air Transport Auxiliary. During World War II the Army Air Forces faced a shortage of male pilots to ferry new airplanes from factories to military bases. Pilot Jackie Cochrane led in training women pilots to perform this important mission. During the 1970s, women won acceptance as commercial airline and military pilots. Piedmont Airlines, which later merged with U.S. Airways, hired Cheryl Ritchie as its first female pilot in 1974.

The first female stewardesses, now known as flight attendants, began working for Piedmont Airlines in 1962. Strict age, height, weight and vision requirements were imposed on all stewardesses at the time.

Sen. Elizabeth Hanford Dole of Salisbury was a member of the Federal Trade Commission prior to her appointment as Secretary of Transportation in 1983 by President Reagan. One of her first actions in this position was to order automobile manufacturers to add a more visible third brake light on new cars. In addition, Dole promoted motorists' use of seat belts and airbags. Today all states except one have seat belt laws.

In 1984 Pat Long of Raleigh and her husband, Duane, established Long Transportation Company, a trucking firm. Its successor Longistics, formed in 1998, serves companies around the world with logistical distribution and transportation needs. Pat was the first female chairman of the North Carolina Trucking Association. Longistics has grown to 500 employees and 150 trucks and has developed a niche hauling high-dollar, time-sensitive goods.

The Transportation Museum today relies on the contributions of women railroad volunteers. Train crew engineer Jeanne Morse and brakeman/conductor Rivka Skidmore are two of them.

The exhibit will remain on display through Dec. 31, 2005. Primary funding came from North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, with contributions from Spencer High School's Class of 1943, Spencer Woman's Club and Pace Communications. Bob Hopkins is the exhibit coordinator.

Admission to the museum is free. It is located a few minutes off I-85 in Spencer, about an hour's drive from Charlotte, Greensboro or Winston-Salem.

For more information, contact the North Carolina Transportation Museum at 411 South Salisbury Avenue, Spencer, NC 28159. Phone: (704) 636-2889. Web: www.ci.salisbury.nc.us/nctrans

Al Stewart is a freelance writer in Greensboro.

Truck driver Javier Huerta of El Paso, Tex., watches ball games and boxing while staying at IdleAire sites. He seeks out the facilities when he's on the road. ▶

Steel trusses support an overhead system at the IdleAire truck stop in Mebane. ▼

KEEPING THOSE **big rig drivers** HAPPY & HEALTHY

At this truck stop they can shut off their engines, surf the Internet, and get a good rest in the quiet comfort of their cabs

Text and photos by Mark Brumley

Big rigs burn about a gallon of diesel fuel an hour just idling to keep truck drivers comfortable inside their cabs while they stop for mandatory 10-hour rest breaks. At today's prices, that costs a trucker about $2.25 per hour, not to mention what it costs in polluted air. In a year's time, a single rig can burn more than 2,800 gallons of diesel fuel just idling. Idling has been a common practice for years, but it's rough on engines, drivers, truck owners' profits and the environment. In some states, idling is coming under fire by regulators as a source of pollution and waste.

IdleAire Technologies has built an alternative truck stop system that's spreading around the country and catching on with the trucking industry and governmental air-quality officials. Based in Knoxville, Tenn., IdleAire is partnering with America's largest truck stop chains to build electrified overhead systems that allow drivers to stay in their rigs and enjoy central heating and air conditioning, TV, computer, phone and other amenities without leaving their engines idling.

The first IdleAire facility in North Carolina held its grand opening last October, with 60 slots for trucks just off Interstate 85/40 in Mebane near the Alamance-Orange county line. Located at the Petro truck stop at 500 Buckhorn Road, IdleAire is served by Piedmont Electric Membership Corp., which is headquartered nearby in Hillsborough.

Founded in 2000, IdleAire plans to add about 80 spaces to its Mebane location in the near future as part of an aggressive expansion plan in the southeastern United States and Texas.

"Next year (in 2005) is when we're really going to put in a lot of these," said John Jones, IdleAire's construction supervisor who worked with Piedmont Electric officials on the Mebane site. "We're on schedule the first part of the year to put in 70 to 75." He calls them "TA's" or Travel Centers of America.

After that, Jones said, IdleAire wants to build 180 more all over the country.

Just like home

Jones said company founder A.C. Wilson, a Tellico Plains, Tenn., contractor, conceived the idea for the IdleAire system after listening to his brother, a truck driver, talk about some challenges he faced on the road. They were on vacation in an RV park, and Wilson sat down that night to sketch the first design for an independent, external system that would give truckers some of the same services available in campgrounds.

To get an idea what an IdleAire facility is like, imagine a drive-in theater or restaurant. But, instead of hanging a speaker or food tray from their windows, drivers get a long yellow tube similar to an HVAC duct inserted into the passenger-side window of their rigs. A plastic adapter, which costs drivers $10 and is theirs to keep, is fitted into the truck window to install the tubes. The tubes, which are connected to overhead units on a steel truss, deliver heated and cooled air. In the end of each tube is a hatch that

drivers open to find a Service Delivery Module with a touch-screen computer. The computer is the interface for all services, including TV, heating and air conditioning and Internet.

The module consoles have credit card readers that drivers use to pay for services, such as Movie On Demand. The standard service includes 20 TV channels, but drivers can also pay extra and get a premium satellite package. There are USB ports for a keyboard and mouse to use with the computer, as well as outlets where customers can connect their own laptop computer to high-speed Internet service. The IdleAire modules also have phone and power outlets.

Making a stopover at the Mebane IdleAire, truck driver Javier Huerta of El Paso, Tex., said he looks for the facilities, because they make his time on the road more enjoyable. Huerta said he watches ball games and boxing on TV during his breaks, but he can only pick up a few network channels with an aerial antenna.

"When you're a solo driver, you have to park for 10 hours," Huerta said. "You know you're not going to sleep for 10 hours. You'll sleep maybe seven or eight hours. It's nice to have TV to look at."

Huerta said he just wished there were more IdleAire sites. "The only bad thing is that you don't have too many around," he said.

Good for truckers and the air

The additional benefits for society, IdleAire officials say, is that drivers sleep better without the vibrations from their running motors and they don't have to breathe in as many fumes. Well-rested drivers are safer on the road.

Truck owners also save money. IdleAire's basic service costs $1.25 an hour, whereas diesel fuel is about $2.25 a gallon. The company said a single rig could save 2,860 gallons of diesel a year by avoiding idling. If all drivers used the 272,000 IdleAire spaces available at truck stops around the country, they could save 1.7 billion gallons of fuel per year, the company estimated.

Burning less diesel helps reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, Jones said. It also improves the environment.

"What we found—we did studies and we also had independent labs come in and do studies—is that the way a smokestack cools everything after so many hours of idling you're spewing almost pure diesel out the top of it," Jones said. "That's where we're really helping, the emissions."

IdleAire's company literature states that a typical diesel rig that is operated the standard 306 days a year spews 55,833 pounds of pollutants annually just from idling. The emissions include carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide. Jones said tests have shown that fumes are reduced by nearly 90 percent at IdleAire sites.

> Dealing with the people out in California and dealing with Piedmont Electric, it's like night and day. These guys were so cooperative. They were here when they said they would be here. They didn't show up a week later.
>
> *— John Jones, IdleAire*

"Because of what we're doing for the environment, the government's behind us on this thing," Jones said. "The EPA is really big behind us."

In March, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented IdleAire with a Clean Air Excellence Award.

The EPA recently announced that it would award a $100,000 grant to help support the construction of another electrified truck stop along I-85 near Salisbury. The Mebane facility was funded out of a $1.5-million grant from the National Association of State Energy Offices to energy and environmental agencies in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

Besides the environmental benefits, new IdleAire facilities also mean new jobs. The company employs local residents at its sites, which operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Mebane facility has 13 workers.

"This is a prime example of a project that boosts the economy while improving the environment, said Bill Ross, the secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment & Natural Resources. "Installing electrified parking spaces at truck stops helps conserve energy and prevent air pollution. Hopefully, we will see many more of these facilities down the road."

Praise for Piedmont EMC

So, Piedmont Electric officials have a lot of reasons to be proud of their involvement in the IdleAire project in Mebane and to look forward to the expansion of the site. As IdleAire grows in North Carolina, other cooperatives will have the opportunity to serve the sites.

"It's a good load for our system," said Bobby Ray, Piedmont Electric's staking technician. "It's a wonderful commercial account."

IdleAire's John Jones said Piedmont Electric was excellent to work with. He said he's overseen the construction of IdleAire sites in many states, and not all electrical utilities have been as responsive as Piedmont Electric.

"Where I have my biggest rubs usually is trying to get the power and the telephone lined up," Jones said. "I can tell you, in dealing with the people out in California and dealing with Piedmont Electric, it's like night and day. These guys were so cooperative. They were here when they said they would be here. They didn't show up a week later. The level of service we got from Piedmont Electric, we were just tickled to death."

The project, which also involved Piedmont Electric construction supervisor Wallace Wilson, called for the cooperative to install a new power pole and transformer for the IdleAire facility. Workers then ran lines about 300 feet under the parking lot from the pole to the transformer. IdleAire took care of boring the underground tunnels. Piedmont Electric officials said that's just one example of how IdleAire's advance planning and organization made the company a pleasure to work with. Not all builders are that efficient, they said.

"It worked good for both of us," said Walter Parker, Piedmont Electric's engineering supervisor for customer service. "These guys came on board and they had their stuff together."

Mark Brumley lives in Asheboro and is a regular contributor to Carolina Country.

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Here are stories about the best investment you ever made.

Moving to North Carolina

The best investment I ever made was moving to North Carolina from New York. I lived in New York until I was 24 years old. Where I came from wasn't all that great. I lived in the projects in NYC, and it was rough. My son and I had to go through times when we would hear gunshots and yelling and fighting every night.

It was September 1995 when I made the decision to move here. Even that was hard, because I left my mom not knowing if she was going to be around for another five years. But I knew I had to leave because it was not a good place to raise children, in my opinion.

Once I moved here it took approximately one year for me to get married, get my license and purchase my own home. When I left New York I had no ambition, but once I moved here I got a lot of ambition to further my education, get married and purchase a home. If I was still in New York I don't believe I would be this far. So to anyone who thinks that prayer and persistence don't work, I am certainly a witness that they do work.

Grycel Butts
Hertford, Albemarle EMC

GO ONLINE

See more stories about your investments and other experiences on our Web site. Thanks to all of you who sent us stories. Next month we will publish your stories about the first place you lived on your own: "Finally On My Own." (Deadline was Dec. 15.) See upcoming themes and rules in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 18.

The secondhand rings

I met my wife in 1957 while serving in the Marine Corps. It was love at first sight, and two months later we were to be married. I didn't have money for a ring and against everyone's advice, we used the ring of a divorced friend of my wife to tie the knot. We returned the ring after the ceremony and about two months later a friend of mine broke up with his fiancée and offered to sell me the rings for $50. I considered the prospect of using a divorced woman's ring and then buying the rings from a failed engagement, but I decided the price was just too good, and besides, I wasn't superstitious.

Looking back after 47 years of marriage, I have concluded that the $50 rings which are now worth about $1,200 were truly a great investment. But they don't compare with the 47 years of joy that I received for just over a dollar a year.

Doug Dickenson
Cedar Point, Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

The bicycle

I bought myself a bicycle for my 48th birthday. I'm not sure how it happened really. It just seems one day a bicycle appeared beneath me and I've been riding it ever since. I'd forgotten how much fun it could be. You experience so much from the seat of a bike. The early morning fog caressing a lake as your wheels whistle softly on the pavement. The smell of cooking from a kitchen window or sweet honeysuckle down the road. The wind in your face and hearing snatches of a car race on someone's portable radio. How good plain old water tastes.

Recently my wife and I rode over 90 miles in two days to raise money for the multiple sclerosis society. I see a lot more of my neighbors who have taken to riding. My last medical check-up I had lost weight and lowered my cholesterol and blood pressure, all without medication. I'm healthier, happier and a nicer person.

Danny Roberts
Thomasville, EnergyUnited

The little yellow cottage

As a young lieutenant with a dog, I received orders to Naval Facility Cape Hatteras in 1976. I always rented a place to live and planned the same for this tour of duty. I discovered the Lighthouse Café in Buxton for good food and pristine, empty beaches, but no place would rent year-round and allow a pet.

Reluctantly, I looked at homes to buy. My stomach churned at the thought of debt. I found a little cottage close to the beach and work that I could afford. Sleepless nights followed signing the papers, but soon that house became a home. For 2½ years I loved my little home and my dog loved the beach.

Twenty-eight years later, I still own that little cottage. It now has central heat and air. The house has been the honeymoon cottage for my brother, my brother-in-law, my nephew (in the picture from 1978), and most recently my goddaughter.

The little yellow cottage that turned blue and gray and later dark brown shake cost me less than my current truck and is worth far more than its appreciation. It's still a refuge and holds 28 years of memories for me and my extended family who have spent time there.

Leslie Skowronek
Buxton, Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative

Bringing up the children

When most people think of investments, the bulls and bears of the stock market come to mind. But the type of investment I'm going to share is about babes and bonds.

While my three children were growing up, I was a stay-at-home mom except for a few part-time jobs. It was important for me to be home to take care of them and instill in them valuable life lessons. We had our own set of sayings. "Disobey and you will pay," I would tell them if they got out of line. This goes along with the Biblical teaching, "You reap what you sow."

There were many gallons of Kool-Aid on summer breaks from school that refueled the whole neighborhood. The back door seemed to open and close continuously like a revolving door. Lessons they learned during those years would mold these kids forever. They formed character and bonded relationships for a lifetime.

My two sons and daughter learned from an early age that God should be the center of their lives. Honesty and responsibility were also at the top of the list.

As I look at these young adults now, I can truly say that the best investment I ever made was spending time at home with my children. I can still see God molding and pruning them to be men and women of integrity. You truly do reap what you sow.

Ann C. Wayne
Davidson, EnergyUnited

The 1972 Vega

Actually, the worst investment I ever made turned out to be the best. My friend Jerry offered to "fix up" a wrecked 1972 Vega which I purchased for $300. The car looked as if it had fought with a semi and lost, but it ran. And aside from hammering out the fenders and a paint job, I thought I had a bargain.

Jerry informed me he just happened to have five gallons of "psychedelic orange" fluorescent paint in the back of his warehouse. My car ended up the color of a crossing guard's vest and could be seen from another state! Needless to say, I did not feel like Cinderella going to the ball as I drove around in my glaringly bright pumpkin coach. One foggy morning, as I was on my way to work, a five-car pile-up suddenly loomed in front of me. A man in a station wagon behind me was barely able to stop in time. As we slowly maneuvered around the accident, the man leaned from his window and said with genuine relief, "Thank goodness I saw your car! What's that color called anyway?"

"Lucky," I managed to reply.

Sandy Dahlhofer
Clyde, Haywood EMC

Pepper the paint horse

Nine years ago I bought a paint horse and named him Pepper. He had one blue eye and one brown eye. I didn't know then just how much I would learn from Pepper.

I've learned that in showing a horse, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, but either way you've got to have fun. We had a rough start because Pepper was not completely broken, and I was an inexperienced rider. We eventually learned to trust each other and began competing at local horse shows. Today, Pepper and I have won many awards and have competed in many horse shows, barrel racing and trail events. It takes a lot of time to own a horse, and I think every minute has been worth it. Pepper is part of my family and my life would not be the same without him.

Misti Reid
Lexington, EnergyUnited

continued on pg. 18

continued from pg. 17

My trip to Italy

All investments aren't intended to reap monetary gains. The best investment I ever made was spending $3,000 to fulfill a dream. The return on this investment could never be measured by my bank account. Unlike money, what I did receive will last forever.

I spent two weeks with my best friend in Italy. There I

enriched my life in ways worth far more than mere dollars. I stared into the eyes of 2,000-year-old statues, ran my fingers across the grooves of chariot tracks, leaned against marble columns built before Christ was born and marveled at artwork and architecture that I had previously only seen in books. I walked cobblestone streets and tasted Italian wines. I took photos of the elderly and the young, the natives and the tourists. I sang "God Bless America" on another continent on the Fourth of July.

Words, photos and videotapes could not capture all that my heart felt. The memories, however, are vivid and clear. I returned to my Tar Heel home with a great sense of patriotism, an appreciation for 110 voltage, ice and cold air conditioning. I learned that the greatest investments aren't always in stocks and bonds. Invest in an experience. Invest in a dream.

Lynn Jacobs
Tar Heel, Four County EMC

Sapphire

The best investment I ever made was a house and land in Sapphire, serviced by Haywood Electric. The house was two stories and modest in style and condition but had 11 acres with it.

When my husband became ill and was hospitalized for over a month, we were in deep financial trouble. We had bought a smaller house which we rented in Lake Toxaway and had problems making payments. While it was rented in the summers it paid for itself, but in the winters it was a serious debt. Because our larger house in Sapphire was on the same mortgage with the rental house, we were in danger of losing both. We were able to sell the larger house, pay off the rental house and move into it, mortgage-free.

Any land that is not in the flood plain has the potential of becoming much more valuable oftentimes within just a few years. I personally know at least two people who bought land when their children were small and sold it when they began college. Their small investment paid for the entire tuition for their children for their four-year college sojourn.

As the saying goes about land: "They're not making any more of it."

Betty Sherrill
Lake Toxaway, Haywood EMC

The "can-do" man

The best investment my husband and I ever made was the purchase of a beach house. In the spring of 1992, we went for a weekend to Ocean Isle Beach to reserve a house for our summer vacation. We had discovered Ocean Isle with its canal houses several years earlier and had been spending our vacation time there.

When my husband came from the realty office with a key to a house for sale, I was flabbergasted. There was no way we could afford a beach house. But my husband is a "can-do" person who not only found a way but convinced me, too.

Now, 15 years later, we still can't believe our good fortune. Not only is our home worth five times our original cost, but, more importantly, we've had 15 years of fun with family and friends. Now we are retired and living at Ocean Isle almost year-round. Had we not purchased our "dream" 15 years ago, we could never have it today.

Although our best investment together was our beach house, my best investment was marrying my "can-do" dreamer nearly 40 years ago.

Mrs. James Hudson
Ocean Isle Beach, Brunswick EMC

Send us your best Earn $50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you $50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

March 2005
Wacky Plants
Pictures of strange-looking or unusual garden plants or produce.
Deadline: Jan. 15

April 2005
Road Trip Horror Stories
Where did you go and what happened? Send pictures.
Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2005
Safety Lessons
Accidents and mishaps that taught you a safety lesson.
Deadline: March 15

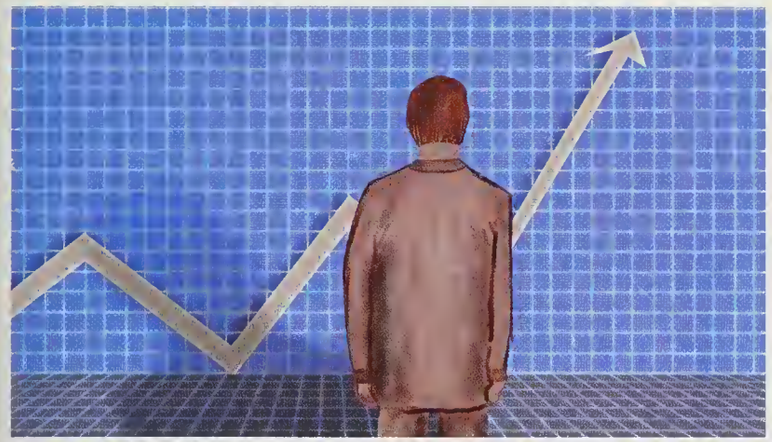
June 2005
On the Farm
The best things about growing up or living on a farm.
Deadline: April 15

July 2005
The First Meal I Ever Made
What was it and how did you like it?
Deadline: May 15

August 2005
What I Learned From My Kids
Sometimes children can teach grown-ups a thing or two.
Deadline: June 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
   Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com.
   Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com



Seven financial resolutions for success in the New Year

By Tommy G. Lewis II, CLU ChFC

Now is the perfect time of year to review your finances and financial habits. Financially, how did you do? Did the markets catch you (again) by surprise? Did money in general increase or decrease the stress in your life? Did you manage your finances or did they manage you?

Below are a few simple resolutions you can immediately implement which will improve your chances for a more prosperous 2005 and beyond. While sticking to these resolutions will not make you a millionaire overnight, they can make you one over the long term. Even if becoming a millionaire is not on your list of this year's resolutions, practicing these simple guidelines will improve your chances of financial success and financial peace of mind. Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2005.

1.) Know Your Financial Condition

It's impossible to prioritize your goals if you don't know where you're starting from today.

Work out a realistic budget that tracks your income and your spending. This is probably the hardest, and therefore the most ignored, aspect of gaining control of your finances. Put everything on paper if you expect to establish good financial goals and live within your means.

2.) Save Save Save

No matter what your income, you can always save a portion of it. Early on in my career, a great mentor once said to me, "It's not what a person makes that matters, but what he keeps." The older I get, the wiser these words become. It's up to you to save for retirement. Two-hundred-and-fifty dollars per month over 25 years would turn into almost half a million dollars (approximately $474,000) at an average rate of 12-13 percent per year. You are probably going to turn 65 years of age anyway. The only question is, what kind of finances are you going to have when you get there? Make every effort to contribute to a company 401k plan, especially if your employer matches the funds you contribute.

3.) Eliminate Your Credit Card Debt Permanently

One of the best ways to reduce financial stress in your life is to be debt-free. The starting point for this is to eliminate credit card debt. This frees up money monthly for other goals (see #2), and paying off entire credit card balances monthly helps resist those impulse purchases.

4.) Review Your Investment Portfolio

The last three years have distorted the asset allocation of many investors' portfolios.

A lot of investors were over weighted in growth stocks towards the end of the bull market.

Now those same investors resist rebalancing because "they want to make their money back."

As a general rule, a well-diversified portfolio is always preferable. What will you do if growth stocks have another bad year? Biting the bullet now may save you an even bigger headache later. It may also very well bounce back more quickly when the market recovers.

5.) Update Your Insurance to Match the Life You Have Today

Your life insurance, car insurance, homeowner's, disability insurance, long-term care insurance and general liability insurance needs may increase or decrease, depending on your net worth and stage in life. Verify the amounts of coverage you have and see if that coverage matches what you need. You may be overpaying for insurance you no longer need.

6.) Review Your Estate Plan

Don't think about estate planning as dying. Think about it as an opportunity to leave what you want, to whom you want, the way you want to. First, get a will, no matter what your age or economic situation. You may be amazed at the number of people who have no will. Ask yourself what would happen to your assets and your kids if something were to happen to you tomorrow?

Don't leave these questions to be answered by someone other than yourself. A will provides certainty at a very modest cost. Also, make sure the location of the will is known.

7.) Remember You CAN Keep Those Taxes Low

"There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes. And death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets!" quips Groucho Marx. Just about every financial decision you make will have tax consequences attached to it, and it's usually wise to do some research or enlist the help of a professional before you execute your decisions. All flexibility with taxes comes before a transaction has occurred, not after. Once you've given your money to Uncle Sam, he rarely gives it back.

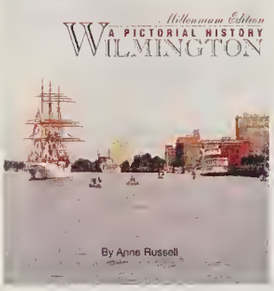
Tommy Lewis is a 15-year veteran of the financial services industry. He is a practicing financial consultant and owner of FIRST Financial Group in Raleigh.

Phone: (919) 876-4926

E-mail: tommy@ffgplanning.com

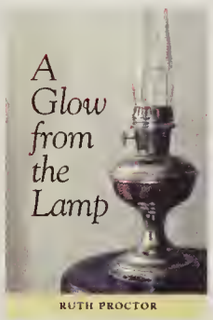
ON THE BOOKSHELF

A Pictorial History: Wilmington



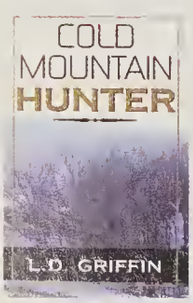
The updated Millennium Edition of this regional bestseller presents 440 photographs and a narrative tracing Wilmington's lively history and capturing its people, buildings, landscapes and events. The picture book's new 21st-Century section provides 40 color pictures to document colorful events at this port city such as the city's first Nautical Festival, the locally filmed television series "Dawson's Creek," the Latino Festival, and other modern images. Chapters include rare drawings and pictures from periods starting with the Colonial, moving to Antebellum and Civil War eras, Reconstruction, Turn of the Century, then each decade up to the present. Author and scholar Anne Russell presents informative, detailed captions with the interesting images. Proceeds from the book's sales will benefit Cape Fear River Watch, a nonprofit group to protect and improve the Lower Cape Fear River Basin with efforts such as cleanups and wetland restorations. Published by Donning Company Publishers in Virginia Beach, Va. Hardcover, 259 pages. $39.95. To purchase the book, send $44.75 per copy to cover tax and shipping to Cape Fear River Watch, 617 Surry St., Wilmington, NC 28401, or call (910) 762-5606. For information about Donning Company Publishers, visit www.donning.com For information about Cape Fear River Watch, visit www.cfrw.us

A Glow from the Lamp



Set in The Depression, author Ruth Proctor puts forth her personal story of a young farm girl growing up in rural Catawba and Burke counties. The stories of everyday life come through in specified chapters such as "Ironing and Mending," "Auto Accident," "Making Butter," "Baby Calf," "Church Going," "Beginning Marriage," and "Grandchildren." Interspersed with the author's detailed memories are real-life nostalgic photos such as the author's mom in front of an early spring garden. Published by the Catawba County Historical Association in Newton. Softcover, $14.95. Call (828) 465-0383 or visit www.catawbahistory.org

Cold Mountain Hunter

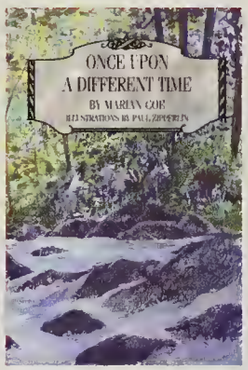


Author and Haywood EMC member Lessley Griffin of Cruso writes about hunting experiences he enjoyed as a country boy in his descriptive memoir. Griffin recalls and explores the art of bear hunting with hounds, and details many creeks, coves, ridges and trails in the Cold Mountain and Shining Rock Wilderness territories. Griffin's recollections stem from a specific year, 1983, and the black and white photographs in "Cold Mountain Hunter" include shots of hunting buddies, town barber, community structures and other little-known or long-gone images. Published by InfinityPublishing.com Softcover, $14.95. Call toll-free at (877) 289-2665 or visit www.buybooksontheweb.com

Roanoke Rock Muddle

This work of southern fiction, set in the 1920s in the small eastern town of Williamston, centers around former teacher Mary Cavett Haughton and her disappointing marriage to local football hero "Big Dan" Hardison. Mary turns to a traveling salesman for solace, and in doing so a secret is built. When it is discovered, it forever changes the town. Author Lucia Peel Powe attended UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University and East Carolina for graduate work. Published by Ivy House Publishing Group in Raleigh. Softcover, $14.95. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Roanoke River Project. Call (800) 775-1100 or visit www.ivyhousebooks.com

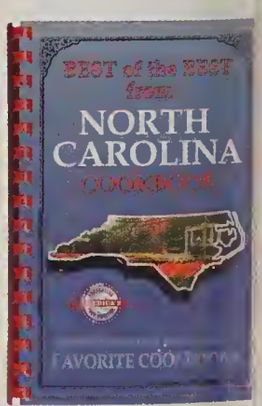
Once Upon A Different Time



Based upon a series of articles, this novel traverses along the hills and hollows of the Appalachian mountains in 1884. "Once Upon A Different Time" includes pages from articles originally published in Atlantic Monthly magazine based on a true account of a mountain trip. Novelist Marion Coe envisioned the trip as it might have happened for her five fictional characters, who depended on the hospitality of farm homes and taverns during their two-month adventure. The pages are interwoven with vivid descriptions of feuds and a developing romance. Published by High Country Publishers, Ltd. in Boone. Softcover, $12.95. Call (800) 462-6420 or visit http://highcountrypubs.tripod.com

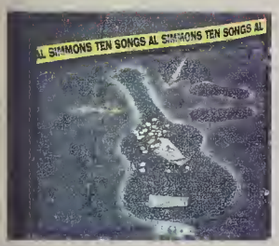
Best of the best cookbook

Forty-eight contributors lent their favorite recipes in this unusual compilation of North Carolina cookbooks. Organized by appetizers, soups, salads, bread and breakfasts, vegetables, seafood, poultry, pies, cakes and desserts, the diverse recipes within these chapters are gleaned from several cookbooks such as "Coastal Carolina Cooking," "The Fearrington House Cookbook," "The Grecian Plate," "What's New in Wedding Food," "North Carolina and Old Salem Cookery" and "Bill Neal's Southern Cooking." For example, the appetizers chapter offers a hot dip with sliced apple dish and crab-potato nibblers from cookbooks "Sip to Shore" and "Island Born and Bred." The salads chapter serves up Cobb salad from "A Dash of Down East," and the breads and breakfast chapter offers "Sweet Potato Love Buns from "A Taste of History." Edited by Gwen McKee and Barbara Moseley, "Best of the Best from North Carolina Cookbook" is part of the Best of the Best State Cookbook Series published by Quail Ridge Press in Brandon, MS. Softcover, $16.95. Call (800) 343-1583 or visit www.quailridge.com



Joe Buds Everything Sauce

A taste of the Carolinas is found in Joe Bud's Everything Sauce. The mustard-base sauce is derived from a 50-year-old family recipe that was created down on the farm and claims to be "the only sauce you'll ever need." It complements meats, fish, poultry, wild game, vegetables, and, well, just about everything. It's available in North and South Carolina at selected retail shops. Joe Bud and Vivian Johnson are members of Halifax EMC. Go online at www.joebudsfoods.com to find the location nearest you. The average retail price is in the $5 per bottle range. A sturdy two-bottle gift box is available for $12 plus shipping. Call (877) 563-2837 (Joe Buds). Telephone/Fax: (919) 790-0404. Mailing address: Joe Buds Foods, P.O. Box 58616, Raleigh, NC 27658.



Ten Songs

"Ten Songs" is Al Simmons' most recently released CD. This collection of original songs is written by Simmons or co-written with Asheville artist Mike Gaffney, project producer Don Scott Hare and others in the Nashville songwriting community.

The lyric-driven material runs the gamut from ballads such as "Can't Get There from Here," and the bottleneck blues of "Boogie Woogie King" to the up-tempo "Used To Be Us." Simmons' combination of layered acoustic tracks and vocal harmonies has been described as Dan Fogelburg with a touch of Gordon Lightfoot.

Al Simmons lives in Moore County and performs in local venues. The CD costs $12.99 plus $3 shipping and handling. Order it online at www.streetplacemusic.com. Or contact Write Street Place Music, 203 Street Place Road, Glendon, NC 27325. Phone: (910) 464-5157.

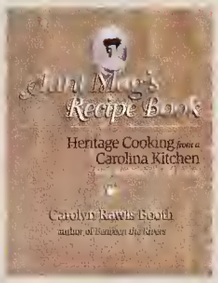
Chimney Rock Park

Chimney Rock Park, located 25 miles southeast of Asheville in Hickory Nut Gorge, had repairs to make following the heavy rains associated with last year's Hurricanes Ivan and Frances. Remsen Behrer (left) and Donnie Tessneer, members of Chimney Rock Park's trail crew, are pictured working to rebuild the boardwalk and railings over the 404-foot Hickory Nut Falls. The park was fortunate to have suffered little other damage. Since the work has been completed, the Cliff Trail has reopened and the park is fully operational. Chimney Rock Park, a family-owned scenic attraction, offers 75-mile views, hiking trails for all ages, nature center, native plant nursery and a variety of special events. Phone: (800) 277-9611. Web site: www.chimneyrockpark.com.

Wounded Warrior, the Medicine Chest in a Bottle

Wild crafting—the gathering of herbs for medicinal purposes -- has been part of the mountain way of life for centuries. Working from his farm, veteran wild crafter Red Alderman crafted a multi-purpose ointment from fresh, all natural sources. "Wounded Warrior, the all natural topical ointment," will treat nearly any skin ailment. The fastest-growing application is the treatment of fire ant bites. Wounded Warrior is made from wild or organically grown herbs that are processed, while still fresh, in pharmaceutical-grade alcohol and then blended in an aloe vera gel. It is manufactured in Asheville. Alderman's daughter, Amy, distributes the product from her home in Wilmington. Wounded Warrior is available today in 800 outlets in 30 states and in numerous other countries. A bottle is $13.99 plus tax and shipping. To find a store near you or to order directly, call (800) 232-7713. Visit the Web at www.woundedwarriorointment.com. Or contact Wounded Warrior, P.O. Box 12095, Wilmington, NC 28405.

Aunt Mag's Recipe Book



What would you do if you discovered a great-aunt's handwritten recipe book that revealed all the secrets of how to put an honest-to-goodness southern meal on the table? That's the story Carolyn Rawls Booth tells in "Aunt Mag's Recipe Book: Heritage Cooking from a Carolina Kitchen." The cookbook presents more than 50 recipes Booth developed from ones passed down through her southeastern North Carolina family, now updated for today's modern kitchen and healthier diets. Recipes for candied sweet potatoes, divinity caramel cake, collards and cornmeal dumplings and baked country ham are among those included. "Aunt Mag's Recipe Book" is available in bookstores and directly from the author or publisher. Books are $12 each plus 7 percent North Carolina sales tax and $3.95 for shipping up to three books. Send check or money order to Carolyn Booth, P.O. Box 6, Cary, NC 27512. Or contact Barbara Brannon at Winoca Press, 106 North 16th St., Wilmington, NC 28401-3819. E-mail: Brannon@ec.rr.com.

Barnes Equine Insurance

Bob Burnett and Joe Barnes of Barnes Equine Insurance have served the saddle bred and walking horse insurance industries throughout the Southeast for over 50 years combined. Equine Insurance serves the farm community in all lines of equine, livestock, agricultural and ranch coverages as well as livestock mortality and medical insurance. The special needs of boarding barns, lesson facilities, events and farm owners can be covered under one business or farm policy. Visit their Web site at www.barnesequine.com. Phone: (877) 436-5167.

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Lanier's Grocery & Service

By Ray Gardner

This is Lanier's Store in Randolph County. It is owned by Jack and Ollie Lanier. They have served the farmer community for 47 years. They started out with a small store across from where the store is located now.

Jack and Ollie have been married for 57 years. They raised six children: Harold, Arnold, Ronald (who died of a brain tumor in 1999), Brenda, Diane and Donald. Brenda has been helping run the store for 30 years (she's in the picture). Arnold was elected Randolph County Commissioner. The Laniers have 17 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

Jack and Ollie have always supported athletics in the community. In summer you will find kids playing baseball on the field and picnic area that they built next to the store.

The store is a hardware store, grocery store and social center all rolled into one. They have items that the local farmers need, and it's a great place to go and just visit.

Lanier's Store is located on Gravel Hill Road off Hwy. 49 in Randolph County near the Davidson County line.

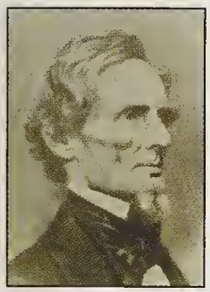
Exclusive Proof Minting in Pure .999 Silver

Confederate Half Dollar Stolen from President Sells for $632,000.00

Richmond, VA.—Headlines were made recently when a mysterious 1861 silver U.S. half dollar bearing the seal of the Confederacy sold at public auction for the incredible sum of $632,500.00. Experts have learned it is just one of four coins produced after the United States Mint in New Orleans was seized by rebels at the start of the Civil War.

Unique Coin of Both North and South

The Confederate silver half dollar is unique because it is the only coin to have the images of both North and South on one coin. One side has the United States design of Miss Liberty, while the other side has a Confederate States shield and the legend: "Confederate States of America".



Jefferson Davis

One of the coins was given to the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. He carried it in his pocket as a personal "good luck" piece.

In honor of this discovery, the First Federal Mint has released a pure .999 silver Proof, die-struck in deep dimension just like the coin minted for President Jefferson Davis. The issue price is $50.00, but for a limited time only you may acquire it at the Advance Release price of $29.50.

Mint Ransacked by General "Beast" Butler

Union General Benjamin "Beast" Butler recaptured the New Orleans Mint from the Rebels in 1862. The "Beast" earned his nickname for his ruthless reign as military governor of New Orleans.

General Benjamin "Beast" Butler

Panicked Confederate Mint officials had already loaded up all of the bullion from the New Orleans Mint and shipped it up the Mississippi to avoid plunder. Thus did the dream of a Confederate coinage come to an end.

Stolen, Then Vanished

In 1865 Federal troops captured President Davis in Georgia. Davis hid his beloved "lucky coin" in his belongings when he was sent to Fort Monroe, Virginia. "Beast" Butler commanded the fort. When one of Butler's officers searched Davis' possessions, the precious coin was stolen. It disappeared for many years; the hands it passed through are a mystery to this day. The reappearance and sale of this legendary coin for $632,000.00 made headlines in the collecting world.

Actual size is 30.6 mm

Special Discount for Advance Orders

During the Advance Release period, you may reserve your own .999 Pure Silver Proof for just $29.50 plus $5 for shipping and handling *(Save over $20.00 by Ordering Today).* A signed Certificate of Authenticity will attest to the history, specifications and Limited Edition status of this exclusive private mintage.

Your 1861 Confederate Silver Proof will be delivered in a clear acrylic holder mounted in a deluxe presentation case. **Your order must be placed during this advance issue period to qualify for the discounted $29.50 price** You must be 100% satisfied or simply return it within 30 days for a prompt refund of your purchase price.

Price Guarantee. All prices are guaranteed during the advance issue period regardless of any increase in the market price of silver bullion.

Confederate Silver Proof Specifications

Designers:
August H.M. Peterson (South)
Christian Gobrecht (North)
Diameter: **30.6 mm**
Composition: **Pure Silver (.999)**
Edge: **Reeded**
Weight: **15.552 grams**
Edition: **Limited**

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ROUND 8

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

Carolina country if . . .

From Cheryl A. Richardson, Iron Station
- You wanted to watch Saturday morning cartoons, but you had to snap a giant bowl of green beans while you watched.
- You've hung pie pans on strings in the cherry trees to keep the birds away.
- Your favorite toys were a stick shaped like a gun and a piece of bark you used for a walkie-talkie.
- You've had at least one dog or cat born with four legs but eventually had only three legs and you changed its name to Tripod.
- Two of your daily chores were to go to the garden and pick the veggies that were ripe and get the eggs from the chickens.
- You've had friends over to help you burn out a stump in the middle of winter.
- You've been injured while having an acorn fight, and it was OK to throw acorns because you wouldn't break any windows in your closest neighbor's house a half-mile away.
- It used to take 30 minutes to get to the grocery store in town, and when you were there you usually got a box of Animal Crackers to keep you quiet.
- You absolutely love this section of the magazine.

From Karowin Cassell, Glade Valley
- Your kindergartener thinks his teacher is a NASCAR fan because she knows the national anthem.

From Cynthia Lowe
- You wrench your car after you wash it.
- "Nene to ask" me means don't ask me anything
- Your husband informs you that your skin is as smooth as a railroad iron.
- You know that all over hell and half of Georgia is a large area to cover.
- You know hickory tea is not a drink.
- Your children are meaner than a striped black snake.
- You refer to the heat as hotter than forty hells, or hotter than the hubs of hell, or you're fairly sure the hinges on the gates of hell are pretty warm.
- When snow is on the ground it's colder than a well-digger's butt.
- You wash your clothes with warshin powder.

From Joyce Shields Moore, Tuckasegee
- Something that isn't straight is annie godlin, so you need a plumb bob.
- Your mother made canteloupe pie.

From Jeff Furr, Monroe
- Duke Mayo is the only kind you eat.
- You know that a shindig or wingding is a party or reunion.
- You know that a fish camp is a seafood restaurant.
- You're just piddlin when you're working around the house.
- You tell your young'ns to quit cutting up when they are getting into mischief.
- You're lollygaggin' when you're wasting time.

From Ernest Richards, Taylorsville
- You say "mash" this button, when you mean "push" this button.
- You know that white lightning really tasted like high-octane gasoline.
- You played Cow Pasture Ball, when you'd run uphill to first base, downhill to second base, uphill to third base, and downhill to home, and pine trees served as extra outfielders.
- Your Sweet 16 is your favorite shotgun for quail hunting (Browning Auto 16-gauge).
- As a child you heard old Confederate veterans singing "We'll hang John Brown's body to a sour apple tree" and you thought these to be the true words to this song until you went to high school and studied history.
- You knew the meaning of "Did you guy them about what they did?" (I remember reading a book written by a Mr. Benfield from Catawba County who served with Lee's army and they captured some troops from the North and they decided the best thing to do was to separate the troops by state. They called out the names of the northern states, but there were some troops left when they finished. One of these said, "You have not called out Virginia yet." Mr. Benfield wrote, "We guyied them unmerciful about that."
- You knew that a mill team or town team was a semi-pro baseball team on the skill level of today's Double A or Triple A teams.

From Connie McCluskey, Indian Trail
- You remember who Phi Ford is and what "alley oop" means to basketball.
- You sometimes find yourself in "the valley of humility between two mountains of conceit."
- Your teen-age daughter says she is going muddin' with her boyfriend and you know where she's going.
- You can remember when you couldn't get Krispy Kreme doughnuts anywhere else.

From Emily Flinchum, Pilot Mountain
- You read these lists and don't know why they are funny because most of them just make sense.
- You shop at tractor supply for Christmas gifts.
- You've taken out a loan to buy a banjo.
- You went fishing on a date because moonlit ponds are romantic.

From Hazel Pridgen, Snow Hill
- You barbecue pig on chicken wire over a hole in the ground.
- You are in low cotton.
- The local newspaper carries the Society Page telling who went to see whom on Sunday afternoon.
- You clean your plate at dinner or you'll get it for supper.
- You made ink out of poke berries.
- You made wine out of wild cherries.
- You learned to swim in a big ditch or local pond.
- Your swimming suit was a pair of bib overalls with the legs cut off at the knees.
- Some folks ate clay for indigestion or heartburn.
- You punched a hole in a homemade biscuit with your finger and filled it with molasses.

From Tracey Saunders-Sheffield, Thomasville
- You know what a counterpin is and you know to stay off of it.
- You know what a winder lite is.
- You have a wash house and a smoke house.
- You own a minner basket and dig your own worms.
- You've eaten a jackpie.

From Sylvia Hill, Walnut Cove

- You know the difference between getting a whoopin and whoopin it up.
- You know the difference between getting hollered at and going to the holler.

From Brent and Julie Tysinger, Asheboro

- You didn't get whipped, but instead you got frailed.
- You know that Pat and Turner are not people, but your feet.
- You know that wallering is something you do in the hay or in bed.
- You've ever told a youngin' to quit bellerin'.
- Unruly kids make your momma's hand itch.
- You refer to Wal-mart as "The Wal-mart" or "Wal-mart's."
- You've ever skipped school to watch qualifying.
- You know that a cheer is something in which you sot down.
- You've ever been slap dab or right square in the middle of something.
- When you step outside on a really cold day, you say, "REEEE-ba-bee."
- You think the fact that Jerry Stackhouse beat up Christian Laettner over a card game is a small measure of justice for that lucky shot back in 1992.

From Hazel Autry, Stedman

- You know what a matt-er-ress is.
- Mama told you to sweep the yards.
- Grandma asked you to bring her med-er-cine.
- You know what a tater hill is.
- You know what a mustard poultice is used for.
- You know the difference between sugar ants and fire ants.
- You have eaten cornmeal gruel.
- You have ever been to fist city.
- You have ever been to pret-near.
- You had a grandmother who had a passel of children.

From Latoria Lassiter, Woodland

- You walk in public with your bedroom shoes on.
- When you leave church, the whole family goes to mother's or grandmother's house.
- You look out your window 24-7.
- Everybody in the county jail knows each other.

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Carolina Honey

Text and photos by Robin Sellers

Halifax County beekeeper and honey man James Patterson says the lighter-colored honey is milder.

Eighty-three year old P.R. Motley, a member of Halifax EMC, remembers robbing the bees. When he was in his teens, he baited bees with honey. The bees came to the honey, and Motley along with a few friends trailed them back to their beehive in a hollow tree. With a pocketknife, he placed a large cross on the tree. "Once a tree is marked," he says, "no one else could cut down your honey tree."

At dark, after tying their pants legs down to keep out the bees, Motley and his friends used a bee smoker to calm the bees. They cut down the tree with a cross saw, pulled out the pieces of honeycomb, and divided their reward: 30 to 40 pounds of honey.

Thanks to North Carolina beekeepers, finding local honey is now an easier process. Honey is available at any grocery store.

But the commercial honey on the grocer's shelf is not the same as local honey, also called beekeeper's honey, raw honey, or pure honey. James Patterson, of Pat's Bees in Halifax County, says the difference between local honey and commercial honey is like the difference between homogenized milk and milk straight from the cow. Local honey is honey that is pure and unprocessed.

"Some of the honey sold in North Carolina is not all honey," says Chuck Norton of Norton's Nut & Honey Farm in Rockingham County. "Some stores buy honey from China or Argentina and sell it as wildflower or sourwood honey, and sourwood honey is not produced outside the southeastern United States." So when you buy honey, read the label. You might be surprised to see the words China or Argentina in fine print.

Norton says there are around 1,300 beekeepers in North Carolina. You can find local beekeepers at county fairs, festivals, farmers markets and roadside stands, or through beekeepers associations such as the North Carolina State Beekeepers Association.

How to tell one honey from another

When you purchase local honey from a beekeeper, Patterson suggests holding the honey in front of a light source. Larry Thompson and Union Power Cooperative member Jeff Knight manage Old North State Apiaries in Stanly County and Union County. "The honey should be clear, free of wax particulates, and any other foreign material such as lint or trash," says Thompson.

Thompson also suggests tasting the honey, because honey can ferment when moisture enters the honey from improper storage. Fermented honey will look normal but will release an odor from the conversion to alcohol. However, "The shelf life is indefinite if it is not allowed to ferment," says Thompson. "In fact, honey that has been found in Egyptian pyramids apparently has very similar qualities to the honey that is produced today."

Thompson recommends looking at the packaging, too, for the producer's name and the product's identity. "If the container is not properly labeled or if the package is not neat and clean, I would look for another honey source," he says.

North Carolina's local honey varieties are as diverse as our state's foliage, and knowing how to select the right honey will have delectable results. The color and flavor of local honey is determined by the nectar source and weather in each region of North Carolina.

Ranging from light to dark amber, honey comes in many different shades. According to Patterson, the lighter honey is milder. The darker honey has a more distinct bolder taste. Thompson adds, "Research has shown that darker honeys contain higher levels of natural

Honey Facts

- In the United States there are more than 300 types of honey including blueberry, clover, orange blossom and wildflower.
- In the U.S., per capita honey consumption averages 1.31 pounds per year.
- Honeybees must tap 2 million flowers to create one pound of honey.

Source: The National Honey Board – www.nhb.org

Honey Cranberry Nut Cookies

1½ cups of self-rising flour
1 cup of honey
1 stick of softened butter
½ teaspoon of vanilla flavoring
¾ cup of chopped dried cranberries
½ cup of chopped pecans
Yield: One dozen cookies

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cream the honey and softened butter together. Then add vanilla flavoring and flour. Fold in cranberries and pecans. Drop the sticky batter by spoonfuls onto a baking sheet. Bake the cookies at 325 degrees for 12 minutes or until the cookies are golden brown.

Where to buy honey

Pat's Honey
Halifax County
(252) 537-4630
Pat's Honey offers honey from eastern North Carolina and creamed honey.

Old North State Apiaries (North Carolina Cooperative Member)
Stanly County
(704) 888-1796
Union County
(704) 764-3731
www.beeguys.com
Old North State offers pure, unprocessed (not heated or filtered) honey from the Piedmont of North Carolina.

Norton's Nut & Honey Farm
Rockingham County
(336) 342-4490
www.sourwoodhoney.com
Norton's Nut & Honey Farm offers sourwood honey taken only from the foothills and the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia above 1,000-foot elevation.

antioxidants, which may be of interest to those who are trying to locate the healthiest honey for consumption."

Thompson and Knight in the Piedmont mainly produce tulip poplar honey. Tulip poplar honey is "a nice dark amber-colored honey that has a clearly reddish tint to it when viewed with a light source behind the jar," says Thompson. Thompson and Knight also produce clover honey, a light-colored honey.

In addition, Thompson's and Knight's bees pollinate cotton fields in Union County. "We get a water-white cotton honey that makes an excellent creamed honey," Thompson adds.

Creamed honey has the consistency of a honey spread and is great for spreading on bagels or toast. Thompson and Knight's creamed honey begins with starter seed — honey that is processed so that the glucose crystals break down into an extremely fine state. "Once the honey and starter seed is thoroughly mixed, it usually sets up firmly within four to six days and you have creamed honey," says Thompson.

So what type of honey has the best taste? Thompson reflects on a study conducted at North Carolina State University. "I recall hearing that some number of years ago entomology students at North Carolina State University conducted a blind taste test on campus using honey varietals from across North Carolina, and tulip poplar honey was the preferred honey by those who participated in the study."

Thompson adds that most people favor the variety of honey that was available in their homes as children. He adds, "They have fond memories of family trips to the mountains each summer where they purchased sourwood honey from a roadside stand and they just have to have sourwood honey."

When Norton refers to sourwood honey, he says, "That's the honey that makes a hot slice of yellow cornbread with a little butter truly unforgettable."

Norton also explains that North Carolina honey will vary in color and taste from year to year because of the weather. "Our spring wildflower is very fruity and light this year as the tulip poplar froze in the bud due to a series of late frosts and from cloudy rainy cool days during the bloom."

When Norton takes his honey to festivals, he offers samples of his fall wildflower, spring wildflower, and sourwood honeys. Most people prefer sourwood honey, but they agree that all of the honey is good honey.

Thompson concludes, "Every honey varietal has a different color and taste and it really is a personal preference as to which is the best."

Of course, the best part of honey is eating it. Patterson enjoys baked sweet potatoes drizzled with honey and loves apples cooked with honey. The best, he claims, is pecan pie made with honey. Honey will work instead of sugar in any recipe. "The basic rule of thumb is ¾ cups of honey for every cup of sugar," says Patterson.

The next time you are at a county fair, festival or farmers market stop by a beekeeper's tent and pick up a jar of a delicious honey. Think of the possibilities: honey cookies, chocolate milk and honey, honey barbeque sauce, cornbread smothered with honey, honey cupcakes, honey muffins, honey-covered pancakes or waffles, honey icing, and honey banana-nut bread.

Robin Sellers is a freelance writer in Halifax County.

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John Edmiston (Reporter)
The Wall Street Journal, June 9, 2004
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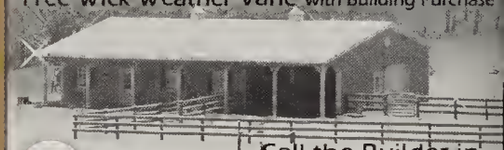

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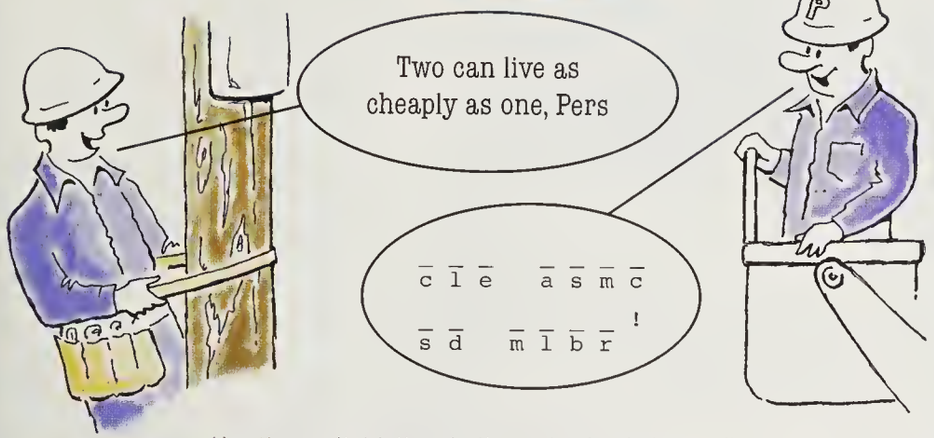

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"AFGHLNORS" means
scrambled

Answers on page 41.

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X

4
G

	8							8					8
	H							H					H

Solve this multiplication puzzle and write your answers in the box tops. Then match the boxes to find three hidden words in your answer.

Say Watt?

Cy Nical says, "One good turn
G [illegible] T."

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E K G A B

Use each letter once to spell out the five missing words. Move from letter to adjacent letter in any direction, up, down, left, right or diagonally.

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— from a wire service news story

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offers long odds that he will
NOT (as the expression goes).
Hill wants what you've got to lose.

Pounds or dollars, place your bets—
what you don't see is what he gets.
Odds are neither more nor less
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500-to-one in either case,
should Elv or Nessie show or place.
But outlandish William Hill
offers much more —14 mil —
should Elvis crash a UFO
into Loch Ness (the place) and show
by hitting Nessie in the head
that Elvis lives and Nessie's dead.
But wait, before you bet with William,
I'll up the odds to 14 trillion.

— Chas. Joyner

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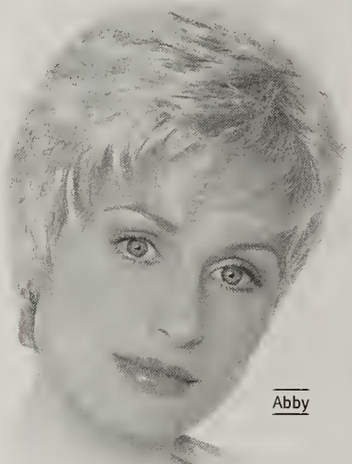

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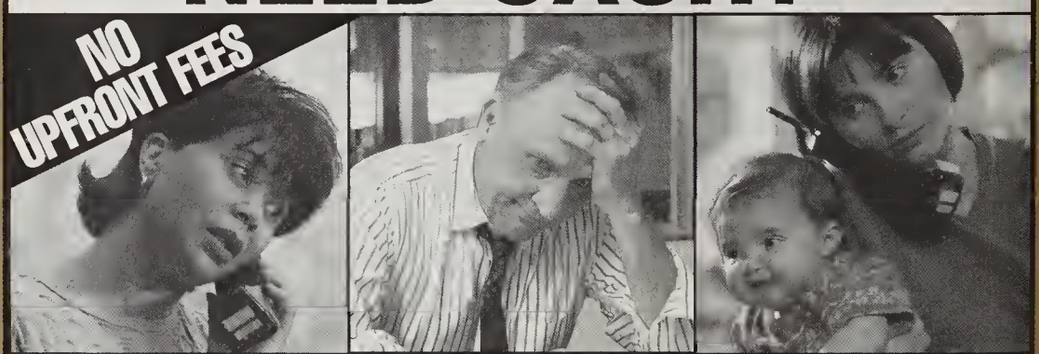

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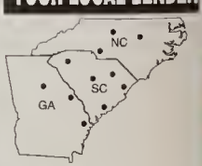

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January EVENTS

Crowds flocked to the first-ever Carolina Chocolate Festival in Morehead City last year. This year's will be held Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 5–6, at the Crystal Coast Civic Center. Events this year include a no-hands chocolate pudding eating contest for kids and a hands-free ice cream contest for adults and a musical comedy about chocolate. Adults $10 and children $5 for ages 5–12. Adult tickets must be purchased in advance. Call (800) 404-5409 or visit www.chocolate-fest.com

MOUNTAINS

Mountain Music
Fridays, Old Fort
(828) 652-1103
www.mcdowellnc.org

The Everybody Fields
Concert
Jan. 15, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

Martin Luther King Celebration
Jan. 17, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

TURKU In Concert
Jan. 20, Brasstown
(828) 389-0033

Southern Fried Chicks
Comedy Show
Jan. 22, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.foundationshows.org

Fringe Arts Festival
Jan. 27–30, Asheville
(828) 254-2621
www.ashevillefringe.org

PIEDMONT

Antique Gun & Military Show
Jan. 1–2, Raleigh
(704) 282-1339
www.TheCarolinaTrader.com

Bluegrass Concert
Jan. 8, Oakboro
(704) 485-2112
www.oakboromusichall.com

Elvis Presley 70th Birthday Celebration
Jan. 8, Matthews
(704) 545-6618

Bring in the New Year Hike!
Jan. 8–9, Apex
(919) 362-0586

Gun and Knife Show
Jan. 8–9, Lexington
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Windham Hills Solstice Concert
Jan. 14, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945
www.bsonic.com

Women's Poetry and Song
Jan. 22, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
704-337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

COAST

American Swing & Gypsy Music
Jan.14, Oriental
(252) 249-3362
www.pamlicomusic.org

American Swing & Gypsy Music
Jan. 15, Morehead City
(252) 726-8148

Truck & Tractor Pull
Jan. 14–15, Williamston
(252) 330-4984

Bridal Fair
Jan. 15, Kill Devil Hills
(252) 449-4889
www.outerbanksweddingassociation.org

BMX Race
Jan. 21–23, Williamston
(480) 961-1903
www.ababmx.com

Carolina Piano Trio
Jan. 29, Beaufort
(252) 728-4488

Chocolate Festival
Feb. 4–6, Morehead City
(800) 404-5409
www.chocolate-fest.com

LISTING INFORMATION

Deadline for March: Jan 25
Deadline for April: Feb 25

Submit Listings on Our Web Site Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click on "See NC" to add your event to both the magazine and our Web site.

Or Submit Listings by Mail, Fax or E-Mail Please include title, date(s), location, phone number and/or Web site url. Photos (300 dpi or hard copies) are welcome.

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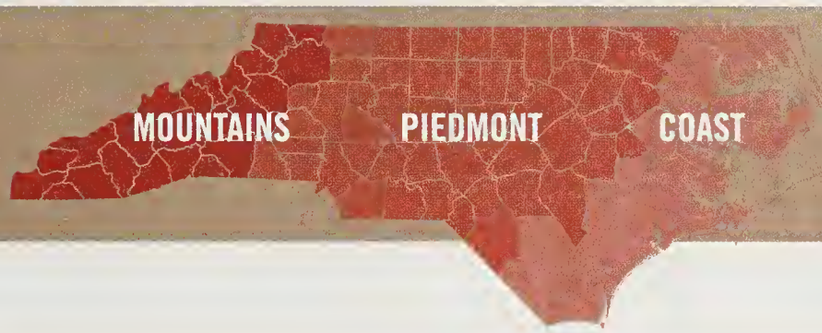
The Cherryhomes family band plays a bluegrass concert Jan. 8 at Oakboro Music Hall. Reserved tickets are $16. Call (704) 485-3649 or (704) 485-2112. See more at www.oakboromusichall.com



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www.HCT.org

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Jan. 18–March 31, Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019

PIEDMONT

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Mint Museum of Art
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www.mintmuseum.org

Marc Lambrechts Art Exhibit
Through Jan. 14, Charlotte
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www.lassitergallery.com

Building Fun: World of Kapla
Through Jan. 16, Durham
Museum of Life and Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

Matisse, Picasso, and the School of Paris
Through Jan. 16, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Art
(919) 715-5923
www.ncartmuseum.org

Star of Bethlehem
Through Jan. 18, Chapel Hill
The Morehead Planetarium
(919) 962-1236
www.chocvb.org

Elephants!
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Schiele Museum of Natural History
(704) 866-6908
www.schielemuseum.org

Spanish Kiln Exhibition
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North Carolina Pottery Center
(336) 873-8430

The Nature and Craft of the Penland Experience
Through Jan., Charlotte
Mint Museum of Craft+Design
(704) 337-2066
www.mintmuseum.org

Pottery American Style
Through Feb. 20, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704)337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

Four Season Photography
Through Feb. 27, Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill Museum
(919) 967-1400
www.chapelhillmuseum.org

African-American Quilts
Through March 25, Charlotte
The Charlotte Museum of History
(704) 568-1174
www.charlottemuseum.org

Speaking Volumes: Vessels
Through April 17, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

"Battle Park: A Natural Space in Four Seasons" presents photography by Tama Hochbaum. The exhibit at the Chapel Hill Museum runs through Feb. 27. Call (919) 967-1400 or visit www.chapelhillmuseum.org

Back to the 60's
Through May 31, Oxford
Granville County Museum
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Treasures Unearthed: NC's Spectacular Gems & Minerals
Through June 12, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences
(919) 733-7450
www.naturalsciences.org

Porcelain American Style
Through June 26, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

Student Art Exhibit
Jan. 4–26, Lexington
(336) 249-2742
www.co.davidson.nc.us/arts

The Harry & Mary Dalton Art Collection
Jan. 29–Mar.20, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

COAST

Batik Art of Barrier Islands
Through December, Manteo
The Outer Banks History Center
(252) 473-2655
www.maryedna.com

Maritime Watercolors Exhibit
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N.C. Maritime Museum
(252) 475-1500
www.ncmm-friends.org

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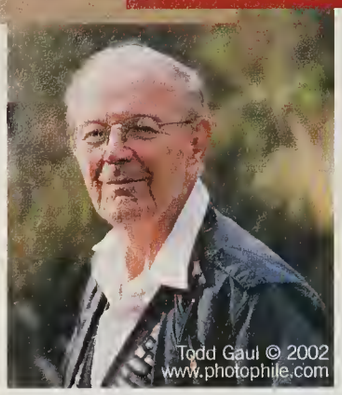
by Hank Smith



To plan and plant a garden is an outward expression of an inner faith in tomorrow.

Winter planting

January and February are opportune months to plant evergreen and deciduous flowering shrubs. Plant them sooner rather than later to improve their chances for survival and healthy growth. This includes roses, camellias and azaleas.

Do a good job planting and you will have better plants with less trouble later. Dig a big hole, at least 6 inches wider than burlapped plants. Add plenty of peat moss or other organic matter, as well as super phosphate, and mix into the soil. Set plants at a proper depth, usually the same depth at which they grew in the nursery. Press to firm the soil around the plant. When setting new plants, it's a good idea to mound a rim of soil around the edge of the hole to retain water. Watering at planting time will unite roots with nearby soil, encouraging roots to become well-established. Keep your new plants watered during their first summer.

As you plan ahead for your vegetable garden, remember there are a wide selection of tomatoes to choose from.

Birds in the garden

Depending on the time of the year, most birds eat insects in addition to seeds, fruits and nuts. Some birds eat nothing but bugs. Birds are attracted to seasonal food. They will stay longer in a garden if it contains plants that flower or fruit at different times of the year. For example, hollies and roses provide winter fruit. Chokeberries and serviceberries offer late-spring berries. Mulberries and blueberries bear summer fruit, and honeysuckle and pyracantha round out the fruit season in the autumn.

Birds are attracted to trees and plants that provide shelter—a safe haven from predators, protective cover from harsh weather, or a place to settle in for the night. Pine trees provide evergreen shelter year-round. Chickadees favor their nourishing pine seeds. Low-growing junipers not only hide birds from imminent danger, they also offer harbor for ground insect-feeding birds such as towhees, wrens and juncos. They provide berries for waxwings and titmice. Some vines and shrubs like clematis, serviceberry and privet are multifunctional plants. Towhees, sparrows and larks enjoy the seed heads of their spent flowers, while fruit-eating birds such as robins, tangers and thrushes gorge on their berries.

When a bird's natural plant food supply has waned, a few well-placed feeders can entice it to stay in the area. Thistle seeds whet the appetite of jays, chickadees, goldfinches, redpolls and buntings. Jays, chickadees and juncos love shelled peanuts and cracked corn.

In planting and developing the garden, consider grouping plants in layers. This creates a multilevel habitat of food and shelter for a variety of birds, whether they feed on the ground, in trees and shrubs, or in the air. Include fruit-bearing shrubs, deciduous trees and evergreens of all heights in the upper layers. At ground level, consider planting ground covers as well as perennials and annuals for color. Fill the layers in between with ornamental grasses, low-growing shrubs, and annuals and perennials for seasonal color accents. The garden may become the birds' favorite place. In addition to being helpful, birds add flashes of color to the overall landscape.

Favorite tomatoes

In a recent survey, the following were voted the favorite backyard tomato varieties:

~ Brandywine: Super flavor, thin skin, wonderful on bread with a skim of mayo and lettuce.
~ Beefsteak: eat just like an apple.
~ Better Boy: longtime favorite with a great taste.
~ Early Girl: heavy producer.
~ Roma: great flavor and not soggy on bread.
~ Celebrity: sweet and juicy; loves producing in hot weather.
~ Rutgers: long-time favorite, never splits, very good flavor.
~ Sweet 100: cherry type, very sweet; perfect for snacking.
~ Hillbilly: heirloom, great taste.
~ Black Prince: heirloom, extraordinary taste, great for slicing.

HORT shorts

- If you haven't pruned your vines and fruit trees, you'll want to do this right away. Muscadine grapes should have been pruned in December, but January is not too late.
- Fruit and nut trees should be planted before the end of February. Good home orchard fruits include blueberries, Muscadine and bunch grapes, plums, strawberries, blackberries, figs, Japanese persimmons, dwarf apples and peaches.
- Nut trees make good lawn trees and provide good eating. Pecan trees are the most popular in the South, but Chinese chestnuts and black walnuts also do well and are gaining in popularity.
- Now's the time to apply dormant sprays on apples, peaches, bunch grapes and berries. You will find a selection of sprays at garden nurseries and supply houses. Follow their advice, or contact your local county Cooperative Extension office.
- It is best to prune flowering vines right after they have bloomed so developing flower buds will not be removed later.

GO ONLINE For more January gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com

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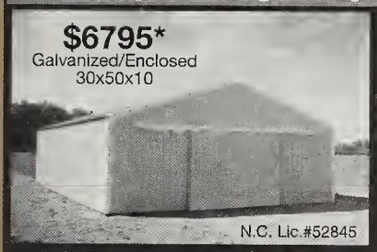

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Solar window heaters can warm a room

By James Dulley

Using the sun during the winter to assist your heat pump or furnace makes a lot of sense. Whole-house solar heating is not always economically feasible in all climates or for all house designs, but making a small one yourself for even just one room almost always pays back its cost very quickly. Building one will be a good family project to get your children interested in conservation.

People usually associate the sun and solar energy with heating a home during winter, but it can also be used to cool your house during the summer by creating a natural breeze. Because the sun's heat can create an air temperature difference between two spaces, it can be used to improve your comfort and cut your utility bills year-round. Also, cutting the peak electricity demand during hot summer afternoons is good for you and your electric co-op.

There are several design variations for simple, do-it-yourself solar window heaters that will save energy year-round. I built a small one for the bedroom in my own home, and it produces warm air output at about 120 degrees on a sunny day. During the summer, it functions as a non-electric exhaust fan to create a natural breeze through my home.

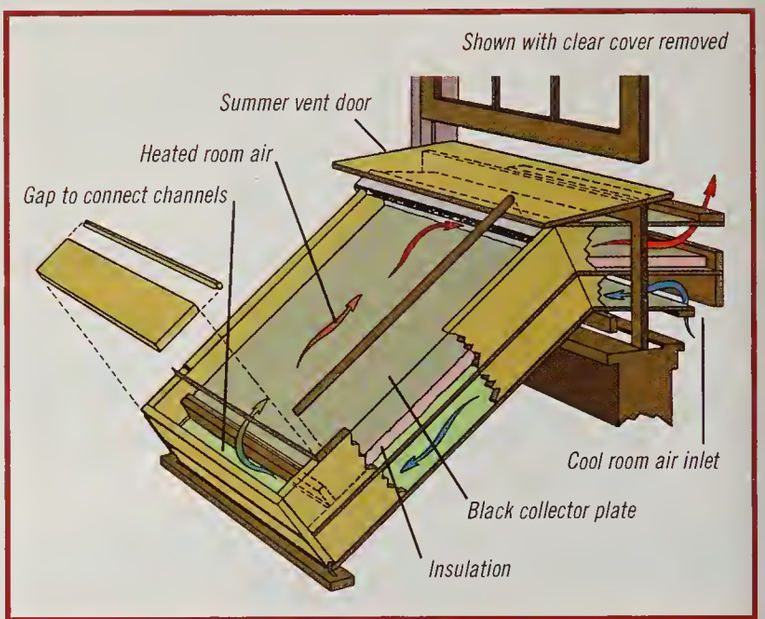
I spent about $100 for the materials, but mine is fancy with aluminum trim on all the edges and with a double-pane top made of clear acrylic plastic. You should be able to build an efficient one for about $50 in materials or even less if you have some scrap lumber (plywood and wall studs) and an old storm door or window stashed somewhere around the house. These designs do not use fans or electricity.

Write for (instantly download—www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 442—do-it-yourself instructions, diagrams and materials list for making three designs of solar window heaters. Some include an optional summer ventilation door. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE.

Send to:

James Dulley
Carolina Country
6906 Royalgreen Dr.
Cincinnati, OH 45244

The concept of a solar window heater is simple. It is basically an insulated flat box with a clear top and a divider panel inside to create two shallow chambers, one above the other. The divider panel is shorter than the box so the two chambers are connected at the outdoor end. One end of the box is mounted in your window opening and sealed with weather stripping against the sash and the window frame. The other end slopes downward outdoors with a clear top facing the sun's rays.



Do-It-Yourself Solar Window Heater

The inside of the box is painted flat black to act as a solar collector when the sun shines through the clear top into the divider panel to heat the air in the top chamber. As this air is heated by the sun, it expands and becomes less dense. This less dense heated air flows up the sloped solar heater and out into the attached room. This creates a natural draft to draw more air from the room into the bottom chamber.

It helps to insulate the warm top chamber from the lower one to increase the temperature difference between them. A greater temperature difference increases the air flow (called thermosiphoning) of room air through the heater. It is also critical to insulate the outside walls of the box so the room air flowing down the lower chamber does not lose heat to the cold outdoor air.

The proper angle to slope the heater from your window depends upon your climate and the dimensions you make it. The further north you live, the steeper it should be because the winter sun is lower in the sky. Once you build it, try different angles to see which warms up your chilly room the most. A steeper slope may provide more air flow, but the output air may not be as warm.

Since I live in Cincinnati, which dips below 0 degrees F some days, I built a clear top with two layers. I drilled several tiny weep holes in the lower edge to allow any condensation to escape. I also screwed "L"-shaped aluminum angle stock (from any hardware store) on the divider collector panel in the warm chamber. The angle pieces increase heat transfer and also create air turbulence. Aluminum is an excellent heat conductor so the air swirling around the pieces increases the heat flow from the hot collector to the air.

For free cooling ventilation, install a hinged door in the top of the heater immediately outside the window. During the summer, block the top chamber warm air opening from the heater to your room and open the outdoor-hinged door. On a sunny day, the solar-heated air will exhaust out the hinged door and draw air from inside your room for a natural breeze indoors.

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recipes editor, **Jenny Lloyd**

Baked Potato Soup

- 4 large baking potatoes (about 2¾ pounds)
- ⅔ cup butter or margarine
- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- 6 cups milk
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- 10 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

Bake potatoes at 350 degrees for 65–75 minutes or until tender; cool completely. Peel and cube potatoes. In a large saucepan, melt butter; stir in flour, salt and pepper until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from the heat; whisk in sour cream. Add potatoes and green onions. Garnish with bacon and cheese.

Yield: 10 servings.

Apple Dumplings

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup shortening
- 4 to 5 tablespoons cold water
- 2 cups chopped peeled tart apples (about 5 medium)
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- Vanilla ice cream

In a bowl, combine the flour and salt; cut in shortening until crumbly. Gradually add water, tossing with a fork until dough forms a ball. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to a 12-by-18-inch rectangle. Cut into 6 squares.

Place ⅓ cup chopped apples in the center of each square. Brush edges of dough with water; fold up corners to center and pinch to seal. Place in a greased 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

In a saucepan, combine the brown sugar, water and butter; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat. Pour over dumplings. Bake 25–30 minutes longer or until apples are tender. Serve with ice cream.

Yield: 6 servings.

Banana Cream Pie

- ¾ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk
- 3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pastry shell (9 inches), baked
- 3 medium firm bananas
- Whipped cream and additional sliced bananas

In a saucepan, combine sugar, flour and salt; stir in milk and mix well. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until mixture is thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat. Stir in a small amount into egg yolks; return all to saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes; remove from heat. Add butter and vanilla; cool slightly. Slice the bananas into pastry shell; pour filling over top. Cool on wire rack for 1 hour. Store in the refrigerator. Before serving, garnish with whipped cream and bananas.

Yield: 6-8 servings.

Spiral Stromboli

- 1 tube (11 ounces) refrigerated crusty French loaf
- ¾ to 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¾ to 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ¼ pound each thinly sliced deli salami and ham
- ¼ cup chopped roasted red peppers or 1 jar (2 ounces) pimientos, drained
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted
- 2 to 3 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese

Unroll the dough and pat into a 14-by-12-inch rectangle. Sprinkle with mozzarella and cheddar cheeses to within ½ inch of edges; top with meat and red peppers. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a short side; seal seam and tuck ends under.

Place seam side down on an ungreased baking sheet. Brush with butter; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 375 degrees for 25–30 minutes or until golden brown. Slice with a serrated knife.

Yield: 4 servings.

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, P.O. Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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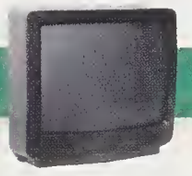

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